

661 that his army was mostly on paper and he had no real strength behind him.

574 Ma Titai's headquarters were at the New or Chinese city, six miles east of Old Kashgar, and here he kept up great state. Harding and I looked forward with much interest to seeing this ogre; nor were we disappointed, for there was something distinctly ogre-ish about our experiences. Half an hour's ride from the Consulate brought us within sight of the long massive walls of the Titai's citadel. Here we were met by a troop of well-mounted but untidy and apparently only quarter-disciplined Chinese cavalry, who escorted us in a thick cloud of dust through dirty, tumbledown bazaars thronged by a sinister-looking half-breed populace to a huge mud-brick gateway of the *lasciate ogni speranza* type. Here the smell which rose from the dry moat below nearly knocked us off our horses. Within, more gateways, skew-eyed like the first to keep out the devils (in China the devils can only fly straight, so a gateway with a kink in it defeats them) followed by a long street of shops rather more prosperous-looking than those outside. Here and there we had peeps up side-lanes of fantastically-shaped temples and other buildings, some half-ruined, others grotesquely painted and surmounted by symbolical wooden figures of birds and beasts.

• 344 At last we came to the Titai's *yamen* or palace and found ourselves in a vast square with a pagoda-roofed gateway in front of us and enormous figures of dragons on either side. Troops of soldiers dashed about presenting arms as they ran and fell hurriedly into line with much shouting of words of command, while the salute-guns banged their welcome and horses shied in all directions. Passing through huge painted doors we were welcomed in an inner courtyard by a short, grizzled, monkey-like old man with a long wispy moustache and fierce eyes, resplendently arrayed in a saxe-blue Chinese Field Marshal's uniform several sizes too large for him, complete with plumed hat, several rows of stars and medals and gold lace epaulettes the size of hassocks flapping from his shoulders. With the gold-encrusted tunic hanging about his wispy old frame like a frock-coat on a scarecrow, and the overalls, as usual in the Sinkiang Army, innocent of braces, he looked a regular Chinese Count Hedzoff of Paphlagonia; but there was a sinister feel behind the *opera-bouffe*—or was it only because we knew about the murders and torturings which went on somewhere behind the grim walls of his citadel?

647 He replied with a volley from the windows, killing an officer
669 and two men. Captain Ma and his party dashed across the courtyard and up three flights of stairs fighting all the way, until at last they forced an entrance into the old man's bedroom. The Titai fought like a tiger at bay, wounding one of the party, but Ma with a lucky pistol-shot in the right arm disabled him and took him prisoner. With the capture of their formidable "King" the soldiers of the Titai, who had meanwhile been fighting with Ma's men in the palace and town, broke and fled. Only four or five of them were killed, the whole affair having taken place in less than a quarter of an hour and having been a complete surprise. The wounded tyrant was bound and taken to an inn outside his citadel, while the invaders looted his palace, which was full of valuables, chiefly in the form of opium, silks and jade. Telegrams were exchanged with Urumchi, and next day the Titai paid the penalty for his crimes. He was put up against the main gateway of the citadel and riddled with bullets, on the very spot where the bodies of his victims, alive or dead, had so often been exposed *pour encourager les autres*. His corpse was left there for a couple of days tied up to a kind of cross for the people to insult and defile, which large numbers of them did with the utmost gusto.

• 344 On the Tuesday I rode with a friend to the New City and returned the call which Captain Ma had courteously paid me the previous afternoon. The slayer of the Titai, a quiet easy-mannered little man with aquiline features and steady dark eyes, took me all over the fallen tyrant's palace. It was an immense wooden structure with four stories and a pagoda roof, painted dark red and covered with grotesque frescoes and wooden figures of symbolical birds and animals. I had heard much about this palace, which had only just been completed; more than once I had peeped through its outer gates with a slight shudder at the thought of the sinister power which had called it into being. It was a curious sensation to find myself climbing flight after flight of steep stairs and entering a large central bedroom lavishly decorated with crude paintings. The walls, the ceiling and the great bed-alcove were all splintered with rifle- and pistol-shots and littered with arms and accoutrements, piles of ammunition-boxes, great-coats, and so on, for Captain Ma's soldiers had taken possession of the place. From the new palace we were conducted to the Titai's old Yamen along a kind of raised way, carried on

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trestles, over the roofs of the houses and the streets of the bazaar; this was the Titai's "Royal Road," along which he had been wont to walk between his old and new residences without soiling his feet with the dust of the bazaar. Between thirty and forty ladies of the Titai's harem were still living at the old Yamen when the blow fell; I was told that they were being treated kindly by our old friend Mr. Wang, Magistrate of the New City, in whose charge they had been placed. A horrible, toothless old major-domo of the Titai's showed us, with ghoulish gusto, over the warren-like zenana, still odorous of its late fair occupants, but turned completely upside down, looted and violated. Carpets were ripped up, upholstery torn open, tables and cupboards smashed to pieces in the search for treasure; for it was well known that the late owner had invested a large part of his ill-gotten gains in diamonds and other jewellery, mostly Russian revolution loot, which he had bought cheap from across the frontier. And everywhere was jade, great blocks of it, half-polished slabs lying about, broken cups and half-turned bangles littering the ground; for one of the Titai's industrial enterprises had been the establishment of a jade-cutting factory in his yamen, by the simple process of moving half the Khotan artisans bodily to Kashgar and forcing them to work at starvation rates on the jade brought from his mines in the upper Yarkand River basin.

Throughout the whole of that week I was greatly impressed by the orderliness of the proceedings. By the evening of the Sunday on which the Titai was captured all was quiet, and there was no disorder on the part either of the conquerors or of the conquered, who in Chinese civil war are usually more dangerous to the civilian population than their rivals. If it had been the Persia of my Kerman days, every shop in the bazaar would have closed at the first hint of trouble and half the population would have been taking refuge (*bast*) against one side or the other. As it was, the only effect of the general excitement was an all-round rise of about 10 per cent. in prices. This satisfactory state of affairs was entirely due to the thoroughness of Governor Yang's preparations and the efficiency of his lieutenants; for there is no doubt that if the dispositions of the Higher Command had been less skilful or the revenge-seeking Captain Ma less bold and swift in his movements, the course of events might have been very different. The Titai and his son, knowing that it was war to the death, were preparing to defend the New and Old Cities

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439 Russia which provides it with manufactured goods, and its own most noted product is sulphur.

363 The streets of Urumchi present a mass of low, formless, utilitarian buildings, covering a large area. The

344 Governor's Yamen, which occupies a large enclosure, contains spacious courtyards dominated by a high tower, from which the surrounding country can be surveyed. Second in importance to the Government buildings is the new Post Office, constructed with a view to dealing with large quantities of mail material.

205 The postal system is excellently controlled, and for many years the position of Postal Commissioner has been held by a Westerner, who, at the time of our visit, was an Italian. Thanks to energetic organisation, the enforcement of a time limit on the couriers, and the careful division of the road into well-regulated stages, Urumchi is brought within forty-five days of Peking—a truly marvellous accomplishment. The direct postal communication with Europe via Chuguchak, Semipalatinsk, and Omsk was suspended during the war, but is now once more available, by which means letters

206 can reach London in twenty-eight days. There is a wireless installation in daily communication with Kashgar, but this is under the strict supervision of the Governor. The Russo-Asiatic Bank formerly had a branch office here, and a few Western firms have opened agencies through which they now carry on business.

471 The stream of *émigrés* who left Russia at the time of the Revolution, have had an important bearing on the development of Urumchi, which has resulted in the formation of a Russian quarter. Here the impoverished

361 refugee, the Nogai, and the Sart live side by side, and of recent years the Soviet Government has appointed a Consul General to guard their interests. Permission to erect a statue of Lenin in the Consular grounds has been